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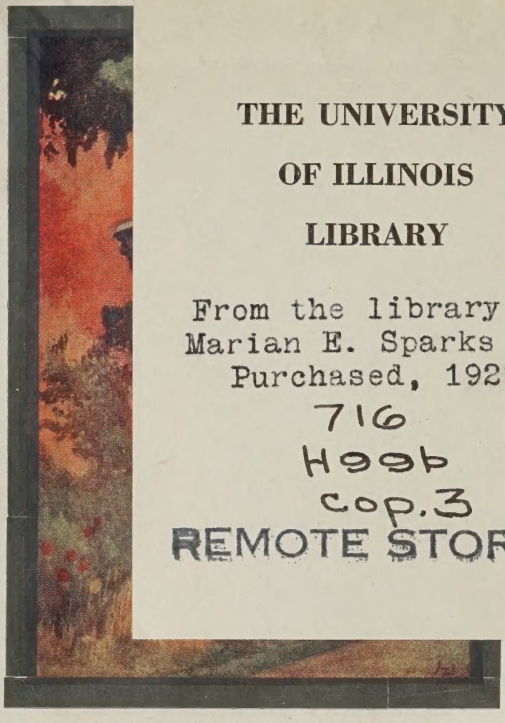

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A BOOK OF GARDENS

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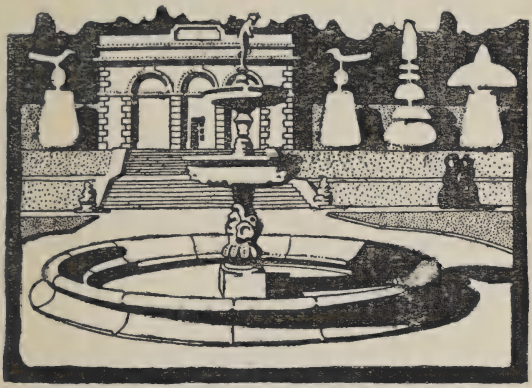

ILLUSTRATED IN COLOUR BY
MARGARET H. WATERFIELD
With Decorations By
A.W.GRAHAM BROWN

T·N·FOULIS
London & Edinburgh

1910

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REMOTE STORAGE

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SELECTED AND
EDITED BY
ALFRED H. HYATT

ILLUSTRATIONS

From Water-Colour Drawings by
MARGARET H. WATERFIELD

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TO

DOLORES ALWYN

I

THE CHARM OF THE GARDEN

E. V. B

AS the darkest hour is said to be just before the dawn, so the point where spring and winter meet may prove the most comfortless of seasons. Frost has disheartened the tender springing that had begun among green things under the earth. Snow has lain with heavy weight on garden borders and flower-beds, flattening them into dull unsightliness. Hardly does one care to leave the warm fireside at home, though rooks are calling in the elms, and maybe a broken note or two is heard now and then from some ever-hopeful wild-bird perched on some bare tree. The wintry garden

There seems as yet so little to tempt one to go out!—so little, except perhaps the winter aconites' chill yellow,

Old gardens

or snowdrops' frozen loveliness—albeit these may be a large exception. There is now nothing scarcely to inspire; only that one word GARDEN—a word so full of charm, that simply to behold it printed outside a book makes us long immediately to look inside that book.

A long while ago, perhaps, the name of garden, as such, bore slighter meaning. Gardens were more like pleasant shades to spend long summer days in. People seemed to live in them more than they now do—in England. So at least it would seem, judging by the old prints and oil paintings that remain of garden scenes. Perhaps the summers were hotter then in those distant days, and fair ladies and courtly gentlemen walked together under the trees, or conversed sitting in temples and arbours (which I think we

in these unromantic days less often care to do). Garden-love

If the modern love for flower-gardens be a fashion of the day, a purer or more innocent fashion could scarcely be imagined. If the sweet old childlike delight of our forefathers and mothers in their groves and fountains and hidden paths and hedged-in lawns be lost now in the rivalry of cultivation of unnumbered species of plants and brilliant bands of 'bedding out,' it must be forgiven for the sake of the healthful, happy, garden-love which does everywhere prevail.

Everybody loves a garden! Men feel the charm to the full as much as women do, though the latter may have more leisure to enjoy it. And labour or dreaming in a garden, may often suggest to the gardener's mind beautiful and fruitful

A nation's tribute

thoughts. So was it with Miss Close, to whom the nation owed the inspiration of the people's laurel wreaths, for the passing of The Queen's Funeral on the 2nd of February 1901. This lady has elected to be a practical working gardener; and she is a devoted lover of the art. It was when at work in her garden that she willed that the poorest in the land should unite with the richest to honour the passing of the Great Queen through the streets of London. She asked the public for laurel wreaths. Instantly thousands responded to the call. Thousands of green garlands were woven and sent forth, till they reached in double line along the whole route of the splendid procession. And thus it came to pass that the love-tributes of England's poor, even from remotest villages throughout

the country, hung side by side that day with laurels of the great. 'Thus noble thought to noble deed is wrought.' Doubt it not that many a delightful thought will come to those who work or linger amid the flowers—those fairest of all God's works. It is not without foundation that we have faith in the eternal truth of the words by an old writer, 'Who loves a garden still his Eden keeps.' And there is nothing that will so long preserve *le cœur en fête* as the indulgence of a pure deep passion for the garden, and for all that is beautiful in Nature.

Among the flowers

II

THE POETRY OF GARDENING

T. JAMES

THE POETRY OF GARDENING

'Lilia mista rosis'

'GOD ALMIGHTY first planted a garden, and indeed it is the purest of all human pleasures!' I love Lord Bacon for that saying more than for his being the author of the *Novum Organum*. Willingly I would give up his four folio volumes of philosophy for his one little book of essays, and all these for his one little essay on gardening. The essay of essays

Dear old Evelyn himself never eyed with more complacency his four hundred feet of holly 'blushing with its natural coral,' than Bacon does his fantastic vision of a 'stately arched hedge.' I envy not that man's heart who can view with indifference the great philosopher indulging in his day-dreams of a spacious plea-

Unpoetic gardening

saunce, where fruits, from the orange to the service tree, and flowers, from the stately hollyhock to the tuft of wild thyme, are to flourish, each in its proper place.

Of all the vain assumptions of these coxcombical times, that which arrogates the pre-eminence in the true science of gardening is the vainest. True, our conservatories are full of the choicest plants from everyclime; we ripen the grape and the pine-apple with an art unknown before, and even the mango, the mangosteen, and the guava are made to yield their matured fruits; but the real beauty and poetry of a garden are lost in our efforts after rarity, and strangeness, and variety. To be the possessor of a unique pansy, the introducer of a new specimen of the Orchidaceæ, or the cultivator of

five hundred choice varieties of the dahlia, is now the only claim to gardening celebrity and horticultural medals. The evil days of system

And then our lot has fallen in the evil days of system. We are proud of our natural or English style; and scores of unmeaning flower-beds, disfiguring the lawn in the shapes of kidneys, and tadpoles, and sausages, and leeches, and commas, are the result. Landscape-gardening has encroached too much upon gardening proper; and this has had the same effect upon our gardens that horticultural societies have had on our fruits—to make us entertain the vulgar notion that size is virtue. If we review the various styles that have prevailed in England, from the knotted gardens of Elizabeth, the pleach-work and intricate flower-borders of James I., the painted

The topiary art

Dutch statues and canals of William and Mary, the winding gravel walks and lake-making of Brown, to poor Shenstone's sentimental farm and the landscape fashion of the present day—we shall have little reason to pride ourselves on the advance which national taste has made upon the earliest efforts in this department.

If I am to have a system at all, give me the good old system of terraces and angled walks, and clipt yew-hedges, against whose dark and rich verdure the bright old-fashioned flowers glittered in the sun. I love the topiary art, with its trimness and primness, and its open avowal of its artificial character. It repudiates at the first glance the skulking and cowardly '*celare artem*' principle, and, in its vegetable sculpture, is the pro-

perest transition from the architecture of the house to the natural beauties of the grove and paddock. Vegetable sculpture

Who, to whom the elegance, and gentlemanliness, and poetry—the Boccaccio-spirit—of a scene of Watteau is familiar, does not regret the devastation made by *tasty* innovators upon the grounds laid out in the times of the Jameses and Charleses? As for old Noll, I am certain, though I have not a jot of evidence, that he cared no more for a garden than for an anthem; he would as lief have sacrificed the verdant sculpture of a yew-peacock as the time-honoured tracery of a cathedral shrine; and his crop-eared soldiery would have had as great satisfaction in bivouacking in the parterres of a 'royal pleasaunce' as in the presence-chamber of a royal palace. It

Oxford gardens

were a sorrow beyond tears to dwell on the destruction of garden-stuff in those king-killing times. Thousands, doubtless, of broad-paced terraces and trim vegetable conceits sunk in the same ruin with their mansions and their masters: and alas! modern taste has followed in the footsteps of ancient fanaticism. How many old associations have been rooted up with the knotted stumps of yew and hornbeam! And Oxford, too, in the van of reform! Beautiful as are St. John's Gardens, who would not exchange them for the *very* walks and alleys along which Laud, in all the pardonable pride of collegiate lionising, conducted his illustrious guests, Charles and Henrietta? Who does not grieve that we must now inquire in vain for the bowling-green in Christ Church, where Cranmer solaced

the weariness of his last confinement? And who lately, in reading Scott's life, but must have mourned in sympathy with the poet over the destruction of 'the huge hill of leaves,' and the yew and hornbeam hedges of the 'Garden' at Kelso. The herb garden

In those days of arbours and bowers, gardening was an art, not a mystery; and such an art that the simplest mind could comprehend it. They who loved could learn. The only initiation required was into the arcana of the herb-garden, and the concoction of simples. This was a necessary part of education then.... They had their own little garden, where they knew every flower, because they were few; and every name, because they were simple. Their rose bushes and gilliflowers were dear to them, because

My garden themselves had pruned and watered and watched them, had marked from day to day their opening buds, and removed their faded blossoms, and had cherished each choicest specimen for the posy to be worn on the christening of the squire's heir or on my lord's birthday.

Nor is it in names only that much of the poetry of our garden has departed. In the flowers themselves we have too often made a change for the worse. Take a stroll with me while I show you my garden as it is, or is to be.

My garden should lie to the south of the house; the ground gradually sloping for some short way till it falls abruptly into the dark and tangled shrubberies that all but hide the winding brook below. A broad terrace, half as wide, at least, as the house is high, should run

along the whole southern length of the building, extending to the western side also, whence, over the distant country, I may catch the last red light of the setting sun. I must have some musk and noisette roses, and jasmine, to run up the mullions of my oriel window, and honeysuckles and clematis, the white, the purple, and the blue, to cluster round the top. The upper terrace should be strictly architectural, and no plants are to be harboured there, save such as twine among the balustrades, or fix themselves in the mouldering crevices of the stone. I can endure no plants in pots—a plant in a pot is like a bird in a cage. The gourd alone throws out its vigorous tendrils, and displays its green and golden fruit from the vases that surmount the broad flight of stone steps that lead to the lower

Some old-fashioned flowers

The garden's choicest flowers

terrace; while a vase of larger dimensions and bolder sculpture at the western corner is backed by the heads of a mass of crimson, rose, and straw-coloured hollyhocks that spring up from the bank below. The lower terrace is twice the width of the one above, of the most velvety turf, laid out in an elaborate pattern of the Italian style. Here are collected the choicest flowers of the garden; the Dalmatic purple of the gentianella, the dazzling scarlet of the verbena, the fulgent lobelia, the bright yellows and rich browns of the calceolaria here luxuriate in their trimly cut parterres, and with colours as brilliant as the mosaic of an old cathedral painted window

'Broider the ground
With rich inlay.'[1]

[1] 'Tot fuerant illic, quot habet natura, colores:
Pictaque dissimili flore nitebat humus.'—*Ovid.*

But you must leave this mass of gorgeous colouring and the two pretty fountains that play in their basins of native rock, while you descend the flight of steps, simpler than those of the upper terrace, and turn to the left hand, where a broad gravel walk will lead you to the kitchen-garden, through an avenue splendid in autumn with hollyhocks, dahlias, China asters, nasturtiums, and African marigolds. Among hedges of box

We will stop short of the walled garden to turn among the clipt hedges of box, and yew, and hornbeam which surround the bowling-green, and lead to a curiously formed labyrinth, in the centre of which, perched up on a triangular mound, is a fanciful old summer-house, with a gilded roof, that commands the view of the whole surrounding country.

A sundial of flowers

Quaint devices of all kinds are found here. Here is a sundial of flowers, arranged according to the time of day at which they open and close. Here are peacocks and lions in livery of Lincoln green. Here are berceaux and arbours, and covered alleys, and enclosures containing the primest of the carnations and cloves in set order, and miniature canals that carry down a stream of pure water to the fish-ponds below. Further onwards, and up the south bank, verging towards the house, are espaliers and standards of the choicest fruit-trees; here are strawberry-beds raised so as to be easy for gathering; while the round gooseberry and currant bushes, and the arched raspberries continue the formal style up the walls of the enclosed garden, whose outer sides are clothed alternately with fruit

and flowers, so that the 'stranger within the house' may be satisfied, without being tantalised by the rich reserves within the gate of iron tracery of which the head gardener keeps the key. The lower terrace

Return to the steps of the lower terrace: what a fine slope of green pasture loses itself in the thorn, hazel, and holly thicket below, while the silver thread of the running brook here and there sparkles in the light; and how happily the miniature prospect, framed by the gnarled branches of those gigantic oaks, discloses the white spire of the village church in the middle distance! While in the background the smoke, drifting athwart the base of the purple hill, gives evidence that the evening fires are just lit in the far-off town.

At the right-hand corner of the lower

Rock plants

terrace the ground falls more abruptly away, and the descent into the lawn, which is overlooked from the high western terrace, is, by two or three steps at a time, cut out in the native rock of red sandstone, which also forms the base of the terrace itself. Rock plants of every description freely grow in the crevices of the rustic battlement which flanks the path on either side; the irregularity of the structure increases as you descend, till, on arriving on the lawn below, large rude masses lie scattered on the turf and along the foundation of the western terrace.

A profusion of the most exquisite climbing roses of endless variety here clamber up till they bloom over the very balustrade of the higher terrace, or creep over the rough stones at the foot of the

THE GARDEN'S LOVELIEST FLOWERS

descent. Here stretching to the south is the nosegay of the garden. Mignonette, 'the Frenchman's darling,' and the musk-mimulus spring out of every fissure of the sandstone; while beds of violets, The nosegay of the garden

> 'That strew the green lap of the new-come Spring,'

and lilies of the valley scent the air below. Beds of heliotrope flourish around the isolated block of sandstone; the fuchsia, alone inodorous, claims a place from its elegance; and honeysuckles and clematis of all kinds trail along the ground, or twine up the stands of rustic baskets, filled with the more choice odoriferous plants of the greenhouse. The scented heath, the tuberose, and the rarer jasmines have each their place, while the sweet-briar and the wall-flower, and the clove and stock-gilliflower are not too

A wilderness of sweets

common to be neglected. To bask upon the dry sunny rock on a bright spring morning in the midst of this 'wilderness of sweets,' or on a dewy summer's eve to lean over the balustrade above, while every breath from beneath wafts up the perfumed air,

'Stealing and giving odour,'

is one of the greatest luxuries I have in life.

A little further on the lawn are the trunks and stumps of old pollards hollowed out; and, from the cavities, filled with rich mould, climbers, creepers, trailers, and twiners of every hue and habit form a picturesque group.

. . . . .

It were tedious to follow up the long, shady path, not broad enough for more than two—the 'lover's walk,' and the

endless windings in the natural wood, till you burst upon a wild common of The wood and its flowers

'Tooth'd briars, sharp furzes, prickly gorse, and thorns,'

glowing with heather bloom, and scented with the perfume of the furze, just such an English scene as Linnæus is said to have fallen down and worshipped the first time he beheld it. The heavy dew upon the grass reminds me that we have taken too long a stroll, and though I could have wished to have shown you my arboretum, my thornery, and my deodara pine, yet the light from the drawing-room windows, which I can see through the trees, calls us homeward, and bids us leave that picture for another day.

. . . . .

Some love for flowers, however, we should have, if Cicero, and Shakespeare,

Lovers of gardens

and Bacon, and Temple, and Buffon, and Scott, be any authority with us at all. . . . What indeed were the Elysian fields, and the Happy Isles, and the gardens of the Hesperides, but so many incorporations of the highest flights of man's imaginations and desires!

III

SUNDIALS

ALICE MEYNELL

SUNDIALS

THE garden clock of sunny climates is necessarily the companion of hours so beautiful that the mere name 'Sundial' is dear to those who care for gardens, for phrases, for the sun, and for the South. The best gardens are those which other ages made and 'kept up,' and which our own age—an unthrifty heir—has allowed to grow somewhat wild with random grass, and somewhat dry with sun. We 'enter into the labours' of our fathers; not into the perfection which they prepared, but into its gentle and more beautiful ruin and undoing. And we inherit something peculiarly theirs in the ancient garden — their usually austere sundial mottoes. A modern man enjoys the bee-visited, grass-grown, and

The best gardens

The sundial of a childhood's garden

fragrant paths that no gardener trims, though the man who made the paths would hardly approve them so; a modern man reads the warnings of a seventeenth-century sculptor, letting its lesson go by.

The sundial of my own childhood faced a blue sea, across olive and oleander, and it bore an inscription which, translated, threatened the generations: 'Thou seest the hour, but knowest not the hour'—'of thy death,' we supposed. In the twentieth century no man would engrave that thought above the terraces of such a heavenly garden. Other Italian palaces had, likewise, severe things written on their sunward faces, or on their garden dials. But, sombre or genial, the sundial motto, devised according to the appropriate art, has the beauty of brevity

and fulness. No wonder if to the precision of Latin grammar has been generally assigned the safeguarding of the message of three or four words, long, slow, and complete with their burden of meaning. A symbolic company

There are tunes composed for bells, and as this brief music, so is this brief literature, restricted to the means and the opportunity, and full of vigour within those bonds. The phrase and the melody both have their home on the happy Ligurian coast. For though sundials number the few serene hours of Northern gardens, they are most useful in the South and the sun, and because of their use they take their place in the noble symbolic company standing by palace walls: the sundial for time, the cypress for death, wheat for life, and the vine for joy.

IV

MY OWN GARDEN

ALEXANDER SMITH

MY OWN GARDEN

An old-fashioned garden

THE house I dwell in stands apart from the little town, and relates itself to the houses as I do to the inhabitants. It sees everything, but is itself unseen, or, at all events, unregarded. My study-window looks down upon Dreamthorp like a meditative eye. Without meaning it, I feel I am a spy on the on-goings of the quiet place. Around my house there is an old-fashioned rambling garden, with close-shaven grassy plots, and fantastically clipped yews which have gathered their darkness from a hundred summers and winters; and sundials in which the sun is constantly telling his age; and statues green with neglect and the stains of the weather. The garden I love more than any place on earth; it is a better study

Silence and fragrance

than the room inside the house which is dignified by that name. I like to pace its gravelled walks, to sit in the moss-house, which is warm and cosy as a bird's nest, and wherein twilight dwells at noonday; to enjoy the feast of colour spread for me in the curiously shaped floral spaces. My garden, with its silence and the pulses of fragrance that come and go on the airy undulations, affects me like sweet music. Care stops at the gates, and gazes at me wistfully through the bars. Among my flowers and trees Nature takes me into her own hands, and I breathe freely as the first man. It is curious, pathetic almost, I sometimes think, how deeply seated in the human heart is the liking for gardens and gardening. The sickly seamstress in the narrow city lane tends her box of sicklier mig-

nonette. The retired merchant is as fond of tulips as ever was Dutchman during the famous mania. The author finds a garden the best place to think out his thought. In the disabled statesman every restless throb of regret or ambition is stilled when he looks upon his blossomed apple-trees. Is the fancy too far brought that this love for gardens is a reminiscence haunting the race of that remote time in the world's dawn when but two persons existed, — a gardener named Adam, and a gardener's wife called Eve?

A place for thoughts

When I walk out of my house into my garden I walk out of my habitual self, my every-day thoughts, my customariness of joy or sorrow by which I recognise and assure myself of my own identity. These I leave behind me for a time,

A bird's nest

as the bather leaves his garments on the beach. This piece of garden-ground, in extent barely a square acre, is a kingdom with its own interests, annals, and incidents. Something is always happening in it. To-day is always different from yesterday. This spring a chaffinch built a nest in one of my yew-trees. The particular yew which the bird did me the honour to select had been clipped long ago into a similitude of Adam, and, in fact, went by his name. The resemblance to a human figure was, of course, remote, but the intention was evident. In the black shock head of our first parent did the birds establish their habitation. A prettier, rounder, more comfortable nest I never saw, and many a wild swing it got when Adam bent his back, and bobbed and shook his head when the

TULIPS AND LILAC

bitter east wind was blowing. The nest interested me, and I visited it every day from the time the first stained turquoise sphere was laid in the warm lining of moss and horse-hair, till, when I chirped, four red hungry throats, eager for worm or slug, opened out of a confused mass of feathery down. What a hungry brood it was, to be sure, and how often father and mother were put to it to provide them sustenance! I went but the other day to have a peep, and, behold! brood and parent-birds were gone, the nest was empty, Adam's visitors had departed. In the corners of my bedroom window I have a couple of swallows' nests, and nothing can be pleasanter in these summer mornings than to lie in a kind of half-dream, conscious all the time of the chatterings and endearments of the man-loving crea-

The swallows

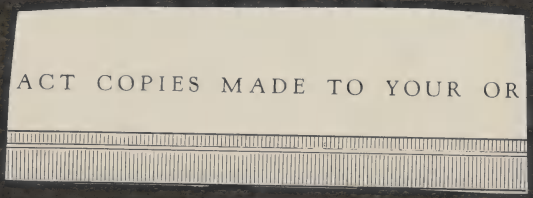
The swallow-world

tures. They are beautifully restless, and are continually darting around their nests in the window-corners. All at once there is a great twittering and noise; something of moment has been witnessed, something of importance has occurred in the swallow-world,—perhaps a fly of unusual size or savour has been bolted. Clinging with their feet, and with heads turned charmingly aside, they chatter away with voluble sweetness, then with a gleam of silver they are gone, and in a trice one is poising itself in the wind above my tree-tops, while the other dips her wing as she darts after a fly through the arches of the bridge which lets the slow stream down to the sea. I go to the southern wall, against which I have trained my fruit-trees, and find it a sheet of white and vermil blossom; and as I

RAIN IN A GARDEN

By Eleanor Hammond

The silvering Willow drips and sighs,
In the Pansy's eye is a round bright tear,
But Lady Daffodil shakes her frills
And hangs a raindrop in her ear!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know it by heart, I can notice what changes take place on it day by day, what later clumps of buds have burst into colour and odour. What beauty in that blooming wall! the wedding-presents of a princess ranged for admiration would not please me half so much; what delicate colouring! what fragrance the thievish winds steal from it, without making it one odour the poorer! with what a complacent hum the bee goes past! My chaffinch's nest, my swallows, twittering but a few months ago around the kraal of the Hottentot, or chasing flies around the six solitary pillars of Baalbec,—with their nests in the corners of my bedroom windows, my long-armed fruit-trees flowering against my sunny wall, are not mighty pleasures, but then they are my own, and I have not to go in

A southern wall

Content-ment

search of them. And so, like a wise man, I am content with what I have, and make it richer by my fancy, which is as cheap as sunlight, and gilds objects quite as prettily. It is the coins in my own pocket, not the coins in the pockets of my neighbour, that are of use to me. Discontent has never a doit in her purse, and envy is the most poverty stricken of the passions.

His own children, and the children he happens to meet on the country road, a man regards with quite different eyes. The strange, sunburnt brats returning from a primrose-hunt and laden with floral spoils, may be as healthy looking, as pretty, as well-behaved, as sweet-tempered, as neatly dressed as those that bear his name,—may be in every respect as worthy of love and admiration; but

then they have the misfortune not to belong to him. That little fact makes a great difference. He knows nothing about them; his acquaintance with them is born and dead in a moment. I like my garden better than any other garden, for the same reason. It is my own. And ownership in such a matter implies a great deal. When I first settled here, the ground around the house was sour moorland. I made the walk, planted the trees, built the moss-house, erected the sundial, brought home the rhododendrons and fed them with the mould which they love so well. I am the creator of every blossom, of every odour that comes and goes in the wind. The rustle of my trees is to my ear what his child's voice is to my friends the village doctor or the village clergyman. I know the gene-

Making the garden

Trees alogy of every tree and plant in my garden. I watch their growth as a father watches the growth of his children. It is curious enough, as showing from what sources objects derive their importance, that if you have once planted a tree for other than commercial purposes,—and in that case it is usually done by your orders and by the hands of hirelings,—you have always in it a peculiar interest. You care more for it than you care for all the forests of Norway or America. *You* have planted it, and that is sufficient to make it peculiar amongst the trees of the world. This personal interest I take in every inmate of my garden, and this interest I have increased by sedulous watching. But, really, trees and plants resemble human beings in many ways. You shake a packet of seed into your

forcing-frame; and while some grow, others pine and die, or struggle on under hereditary defect, showing indifferent blossoms late in the season, and succumb at length. So far as one could discover, the seeds were originally alike,—they received the same care, they were fed by the same moisture and sunlight; but of no two of them are the issues the same. Do I not see something of this kind in the world of men, and can I not please myself with quaint analogies? These plants and trees have their seasons of illness and their sudden deaths. Your best rose-tree, whose fame has spread for twenty miles, is smitten by some fell disease; its leaves take an unhealthy hue, and in a day or so it is sapless,—dead. A tree of mine, the first last spring to put out its leaves, and which wore them till

Quaint analogies

The tragedies of the garden

November, made this spring no green response to the call of the sunshine. Marvelling what ailed it, I went to examine, and found it had been dead for months; and yet during the winter there had been no frost to speak of, and more than its brothers and sisters it was in no way exposed. These are the tragedies of the garden, and they shadow forth other tragedies nearer us. In everything we find a kind of dim mirror of ourselves. Sterne, if placed in a desert, said he would love a tree; and I can fancy such a love would not be altogether unsatisfying. Love of trees and plants is safe. You do not run risk in your affections. They are my children, silent and beautiful, untouched by any passion, unpolluted by evil tempers; for me they leaf and flower themselves. In autumn they put off their

rich apparel, but next year they are back again, with dresses fair as ever; and—one can extract a kind of fanciful bitterness from the thought—should I be laid in my grave in winter, they would all in spring be back again, with faces as bright and with breaths as sweet, missing me not at all. Ungrateful, the one I am fondest of would blossom very prettily if planted on the soil that covers me,—where my dog would die, where my best friend would perhaps raise an inscription! Flowers and trees

I like flowering plants, but I like trees more,—for the reason, I suppose, that they are slower in coming to maturity, are longer lived, that you can become better acquainted with them, and that in the course of years memories and associations hang as thickly on their boughs as do leaves in summer or fruits in autumn.

The centuries' witnesses

I do not wonder that great earls value their trees, and never, save in direst extremity, lift upon them the axe. Ancient descent and glory are made audible in the proud murmur of immemorial woods. There are forests in England whose leafy noises may be shaped into Agincourt and the names of the battlefields of the Roses; oaks that dropped their acorns in the year that Henry VIII. held his Field of the Cloth of Gold, and beeches that gave shelter to the deer when Shakespeare was a boy. There they stand, in sun and shower, the broad-armed witnesses of perished centuries; and sore must his need be who commands a woodland massacre. A great English tree, the rings of a century in its bole, is one of the noblest of natural objects; and it touches the imagination no less than the eye, for

it grows out of tradition and a past order of things, and is pathetic with the suggestions of dead generations. Trees waving a colony of rooks in the wind to-day, are older than historic lines. Trees are your best antiques. There are cedars on Lebanon which the axes of Solomon spared, they say, when he was busy with his Temple; there are olives on Olivet that might have rustled in the ears of the Master and the Twelve; there are oaks in Sherwood which have tingled to the horn of Robin Hood, and have listened to Maid Marian's laugh. Think of an existing Syrian cedar which is nearly as old as history, which was middle-aged before the wolf suckled Romulus! Think of an existing English elm in whose branches the heron was reared which the hawks of Saxon Harold killed! If you

Trees the best antiques

On planting trees

are a notable, and wish to be remembered, better plant a tree than build a city or strike a medal; it will outlast both.

My trees are young enough, and if they do not take me away into the past, they project me into the future. When I planted them, I knew I was performing an act, the issues of which would outlast me long. My oaks are but saplings; but what undreamed-of English kings will they not outlive! I pluck my apples, my pears, my plums; and I know that from the same branches other hands will pluck apples, pears, and plums when this body of mine will have shrunk into a pinch of dust. I cannot dream with what year these hands will date their letters. A man does not plant a tree for himself, he plants it for posterity. And, sitting idly in the sunshine, I think at times of

the unborn people who will, to some small extent, be indebted to me. Remember me kindly, ye future men and women! When I am dead, the juice of my apples will foam and spurt in your cider-presses, my plums will gather for you their misty bloom; and that any of your youngsters should be choked by one of my cherry-stones, merciful Heaven forfend! A request

V

THE GARDEN OF ENCHANTMENT

ALPHONSE KARR

A SOUTHERN GARDEN

A delightful country

I WILL delineate what my garden affords. The seasons, as they pass away, are climates which travel round the globe, and come to seek me. . . . But there is still another land, a delightful country, which would in vain be sought for on the waves of the sea, or across lofty mountains. In that country, the flowers not only exhale sweet perfumes, but intoxicating thoughts of love. There every tree, every plant breathes, in a language more noble than poetry, and more sweet than music, things of which no human tongues can give an idea. The sand of the roads is gold and precious stones; the air is filled with songs, compared to which those of the nightingales and thrushes, which I now listen to, are no better than the

The poetic isles

croaking of frogs in their reedy marshes. Man in that land is good, great, noble, and generous.

There all things are the reverse of those which we see every day; all the treasures of the earth, all dignities crowded together, would be but objects of ridicule, if these were offered in exchange for a faded flower, or an old glove, left in a honeysuckle arbour. But why do I talk of honeysuckles? Why am I forced to give the names of flowers you know to the flowers of these charming regions? In this country no one believes in the existence of perfidy, inconstancy, old age, death, or forgetfulness, which is the death of the heart. Life is there more wildly happy than dreams can aspire to be in other countries. Go, then, and seek these poetic isles.

Alas! in reality it was but a poor little garden, in a mean suburb, when I was eighteen, in love, and when *she* would steal thither for an instant at sunset! A shut-up garden

So loved I a little shut-up garden!

After all, is the life anything but a terrible journey, without repose, and with but one common end in view? Is it anything more than arriving successively at various ages, and taking or leaving something at each? Does not all that surrounds us change every year? Is not every age a different country? You were a child; you are a young man; you may become an old man. Do you believe you shall find as much difference between two persons, however remote from each other they may be, as between you a child, and you an old man?

You are in childhood;—the man is

Mystic happiness

there with this fair hair, his bold, limpid glance, and his light and joyous heart; he loves every one, and every one seems to love him; everything gives him something, and everything promises him still much more. . . . All give him pleasure, all whisper to him promises of mystic happiness.

You arrive at youth; the body is active and strong, the heart noble and disinterested. There, you violently break the playthings of your childhood, and smile at the importance you once attached to them, because you found some fresh playthings, with which you are as much in earnest as you were with your tops and balls. Now is the turn of friendship, love, heroism, and devotedness, — you have all these within you, and you look for them in others. But these are flowers

that fade, and do not flourish at the same time in every heart. With this one, they are only in bud; with that, they have long since passed away. You ask aloud the accomplishment of your desires, as you would ask holy promises. There is not a flower or a tree that does not appear to have betrayed you. . . .

Flowers that fade

Days and years are darts which Death launches at us, it reserves the most penetrating for old age; the early ones have destroyed successively your faiths, your passions, your virtues, your happiness. Now it pours in grape-shot! . . .

Tell me, are we to-day that which we were yesterday, or shall be to-morrow? Have we not cause to make singular observations upon ourselves daily? Do we not present a curious spectacle to ourselves?

A touching sentiment

Well, I will decide to commence my journey to-morrow, or perhaps I shall finish by finding that it is too great an exertion, even to make a tour of one's garden.

. . . . .

A touching sentiment has consecrated certain plants and certain trees to those who have departed this life: the cypress, which elevates its black foliage like a pyramid; the weeping willow, which envelopes a tomb with its pendent branches; the honeysuckle, which grows in cemeteries more beautifully and vigorously than elsewhere, and which spreads a sweet odour, that seems to be the soul of the dead exhaling and ascending to heaven; the periwinkle, with its dark green foliage and blossoms of lapis blue, so fresh and so charming, and which the

peasantry call the *violet of the dead.* But there are other flowers which associate themselves with certain joys, and certain dead griefs likewise ; for forgetfulness is the death of things which no longer live in the heart. The flowers' return

These flowers return every year, at a fixed period, like anniversaries, to repeat to me many recitals of the past, of perished trust and dead hope, of which nothing more remains than that which remains of the beloved dead—a tender sadness, and a melancholy which softens the heart.

These ideas come back to me on seeing these forget-me-nots, these pretty little blue flowers, creeping almost into the water.

Perhaps to all the world but me this large lime-tree is a magnificent tent of transparent green ; you see birds hop

The lime-tree

about in its branches; and butterflies, which love silence and shade, flirt among the leaves like nymphs and fauns, and you inhale the sweet odour of its flowers. But for me, it seems that the wind which agitates these leaves, repeats to me all the things I have said and heard at the foot of another lime-tree, in far bygone times; the shade of the leaves of the tree, and the rays of the sun which they break, form for me images which I can only see there; that odour intoxicates me, troubles my reason, and plunges me into ecstasies and visions. The Pythoness of old saw the future at the moment of inspiration; *I* behold the past again, but not as past; I tread over again every one of the steps I have made in life, everything lives again for me, with the colours of the vestments, the words that were spoken, and the

sound of the voice. I do not forget the least circumstance of a single instant; by recalling a word, I see again a thousand details which I did not know I had remarked. I behold the folds of her robe and the reflection of her hair; I see how the sun and the shade played upon her countenance, and what flowers blossomed in the grass, and what odours were exhaled in the air, and what distant noise was heard; I see, I breathe, I hear all this! Flower fragrance

If my eyes fall upon one of those *ravenelles*, of those gilly-flowers which blossom on the walls, if I breathe its balsamic perfume, I become the prey of an enchantment. I am twenty years old; I find myself no longer in this garden; I ascend a flight of stone steps, green with moss, in the crevices of which

The convolvulus

blossom gilly-flowers, and my heart beats as if I were about to find *her* in the garden. That convolvulus, those beautiful violet, white, rose-coloured, streaked bells, which climb up trees and shrubs, tell me on what day it was we sowed some of its seeds together, and at what hour of the day, and what was the form at that instant of the white clouds in the blue heavens, and how, on rising up, as we had stooped to put the seeds in the ground, our hair touched; and my hair again seems to communicate an electric shock to my heart. And, afterwards, how both arose early to see *our* convolvulus, whose flowers close and fade as soon as they are touched by the sun. I still know which of the plants bloomed first; it was a large bell of a beautiful dark blue, passing to violet in insensible gradations as

the eye approached the bottom of the flower, which was white. There were some white ones, divided by a rose-coloured, faint blue, or violet cross; others of a pale rose, with a deep coloured cross; some striped with white, rose, and violet. Passe-Roses

And the large Passe-Roses, with their noble and majestic port, like that of Italian poplars. There were lime-trees in the garden, a tuft of yellow blossoms always filled with bees, black and orange drones, and large black flies with violet wings. It appears to me when I here see the yellow Passe-Roses, and black flies with violet wings, and bees, and brown and orange drones; it appears to me that these things, like those of another time, draw other circumstances after them, like the beads of a rosary.

A flower monument

Blossom, blossom! graceful monuments which I have raised to my beloved dead, to all that I have believed, to all that I have loved, to all that I have hoped, to all that which like thee has blossomed in my heart, to all that has faded, but for ever, whilst every summer you return with your beauty, your youth, and your perfume!

VI

QUEEN MARY'S CHILD-GARDEN

DR. JOHN BROWN

QUEEN MARY'S CHILD-GARDEN

'QUEEN MARY'S BOWER*

'The moated bower is wild and drear,
And sad the dark yew's shade;
The flowers which bloom in silence here,
In silence also fade.

The woodbine and the light wild rose
Float o'er the broken wall;
And here the mournful nightshade blows,
To note the garden's fall.

Where once a princess wept her woes,
The bird of night complains;
And sighing trees the tale disclose
They learnt from Mary's strains.'

A pleasure

IF anyone wants a pleasure that is sure to please, one over which he needn't growl the sardonic beatitude of the great Dean, let him, when the Mercury is at

* Lines written on the steps of a small moated garden at Chatsworth.

Highland scenery

'Fair,' take the nine a.m. train to the North and a return ticket for Callander, and when he arrives at Stirling, let him ask the most obliging and knowing of station-masters to telegraph to 'the Dreadnought' for a carriage to be in waiting. When passing Dunblane Cathedral, let him resolve to write to the *Scotsman*, advising the removal of a couple of shabby trees which obstruct the view of that beautiful triple end window which Mr. Ruskin and everybody else admires, and by the time he has written this letter in his mind, and turned the sentences to it, he will find himself at Callander and the carriage all ready. Giving the order for the *Port of Monteith*, he will rattle through this hard-featured, and to our eye comfortless village, lying ugly amid so much grandeur and beauty, and let him stop

THE GROVE

on the crown of the bridge, and fill his eyes with the perfection of the view up the Pass of Leny—the Teith lying diffuse and asleep, as if its heart were in the Highlands and it were loath to go, the noble Ben Ledi imaged in its broad stream. Then let him make his way across a bit of pleasant moorland —flushed with maiden-hair and white with cotton grass, and fragrant with the *Orchis conopsia*, well deserving its epithet *odoratissima*. Highland scenery

He will see from the turn of the hill-side the Blair of Drummond waving with corn and shadowed with rich woods, where eighty years ago there was a black peat-moss; and far off, on the horizon, Damyat and the Touch Fells; and at his side the little loch of Ruskie, in which he may see five Highland cattle, three

The Lake of Monteith

tawny brown and two brindled, standing in the still water—themselves as still, all except their switching tails and winking ears—the perfect images of quiet enjoyment. By this time he will have come in sight of the Lake of Monteith, set in its woods, with its magical shadows and soft gleams. There is a loveliness, a gentleness and peace about it more like 'lone St. Mary's Lake,' or Derwent Water, than of any of its sister lochs. It is lovely rather than beautiful, and is a sort of gentle prelude, in the *minor* key, to the coming glories and intenser charms of Loch Ard and the true Highlands beyond.

You are now at the Port, and have passed the secluded and cheerful manse, and the parish kirk with its graves, close to the lake, and the proud aisle of the

Grahams of Gartmore washed by its waves. Across the road is the modest little inn, a Fisher's Tryst. On the unruffled water lie several islets, plump with rich foliage, brooding like great birds of calm. You somehow think of them as on, not in the lake, or like clouds lying in a nether sky—'like ships waiting for the wind.' You get a coble, and a *yauld* old Celt, its master, and are rowed across to *Inchmahome*, *the Isle of Rest*. Here you find on landing huge Spanish chestnuts, one lying dead, others standing stark and peeled, like gigantic antlers, and others flourishing in their *viridis senectus*, and in a thicket of wood you see the remains of a monastery of great beauty, the design and workmanship exquisite. You wander through the ruins, overgrown with ferns and Spanish filberts, and old

The Isle of Rest

The child-Queen's garden

fruit trees, and at the corner of the old monkish garden you come upon one of the strangest and most touching sights you ever saw—an oval space of about eighteen feet by twelve, with the remains of a double row of boxwood all round, the plants of box being about fourteen feet high, and eight or nine inches in diameter, healthy, but plainly of great age.

What is this? it is called in the guide-books Queen Mary's Bower; but besides its being plainly not in the least a bower, what could the little Queen, then five years old, and 'fancy free,' do with a bower? It is plainly, as was, we believe, first suggested by our keen-sighted and diagnostic Professor of Clinical Surgery, *the Child-Queen's Garden*, with her little walk, and its rows of boxwood, left to

themselves for three hundred years. Yes, without doubt, 'here is that first garden of her simpleness.' Fancy the little, lovely royal child, with her four Marys, her playfellows, her child maids of honour, with their little hands and feet, and their innocent and happy eyes, pattering about that garden all that time ago, laughing, and running, and gardening as only children do and can. As is well known, Mary was placed by her mother in this Isle of Rest before sailing from the Clyde for France. There is something 'that tirls the heartstrings a' to the life' in standing and looking on this unmistakable living relic of that strange and pathetic old time. Were we Mr. Tennyson, we would write an Idyll of that child Queen, in that garden of hers, eating her bread and honey—

A living relic of the past

The Queen of History

getting her teaching from the holy men, the monks of old, and running off in wild mirth to her garden and her flowers, all unconscious of the black, lowering thunder-cloud on Ben Lomond's shoulder.

'Oh, blessed vision! happy child!
Thou art so exquisitely wild;
I think of thee with many fears
Of what may be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality.
And Grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sat within the touch of thee.
What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow?'

You have ample time to linger there amid

'The gleams, the shadows, and the peace profound,'

and get your mind informed with quietness and beauty, and fed with thoughts of other years, and of her whose story,

like Helen of Troy's, will continue to move the hearts of men as long as the grey hills stand round about that gentle lake, and are mirrored at evening in its depths. You may do and enjoy all this, and be in Princes Street by nine p.m.; and we wish we were as sure of many things as of your saying, 'Yes, this *is* a pleasure that has pleased, and will please again; this was something expected which did not disappoint.'

A pleasure that has pleased

. . . . .

There is another garden of Queen Mary's, which may still be seen, and which has been left to itself like that in the Isle of Rest. It is in the grounds at Chatsworth, and is moated, walled round, and raised about fifteen feet above the park. Here the Queen, when a prisoner under the charge of 'Old Bess of Hard-

At Chatsworth

wake,' was allowed to walk without any guard. How different the two! and how different she who took her pleasure in them!

VII

A VANISHED GARDEN

SIR WALTER SCOTT

A VANISHED GARDEN

Antique gardens

IT must be acknowledged that there exist gardens, the work of Loudon, Wise, and such persons as laid out grounds in the Dutch taste, which would be much better subjects for modification than for absolute destruction. Their rarity now entitles them to some care as a species of antiques, and unquestionably they give character to some snug, quiet, and sequestered situations which would otherwise have no marked feature of any kind. We ourselves retain an early and pleasing recollection of the seclusion of such a scene. A small cottage adjacent to a beautiful village, the habitation of an ancient maiden lady, was for some time our abode. It was situated in a garden of seven or eight

Bower and arbour

acres, planted, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, by one of the Millars, related to the author of the *Gardener's Dictionary*, or, for aught we know, by himself. It was full of long straight walks between hedges of yew and hornbeam, which rose tall and close on every side. There were thickets of flowering shrubs, a bower, and an arbour, to which access was obtained through a little maze of contorted walks, calling itself a labyrinth. In the centre of the bower was a splendid Platanus, or oriental plane—a huge hill of leaves—one of the noblest specimens of that reputably beautiful tree which we remember to have seen. In different parts of the garden were fine ornamental trees which had attained great size, and the orchard was filled with fruit-trees of the best descrip-

tion. There were seats and trellis-walks and a banqueting house. Even in our time this little scene, intended to present a formal exhibition of vegetable beauty, was going fast to decay. The parterres of flowers were no longer watched by the quiet and simple *friends* under whose auspices they had been planted, and much of the ornament of the domain had been neglected or destroyed to increase its productive value. We visited it lately, after an absence of many years. Its air of retreat, the seclusion which its alleys afforded, was entirely gone; the huge Platanus had died, like most of its kind, in the beginning of this century; the hedges were cut down, the trees stubbed up, and the whole character of the place so much destroyed, that I was glad when I could leave it.

A garden of the past

VIII

A GARDEN BY THE CLYDE

JOHN WILSON

(CHRISTOPHER NORTH)

A LADY WITH DECOLLETTE
PLATE 25 OF 48 PLATES

WE have all our lives envied Adam. Yet, would you believe it, not for his abode in Paradise. The soul cannot now conceive a perfectly sinless and perfectly happy state of being; and a mere name, and no more, to our ear is the garden of Eden, ere was plucked

The Garden of Eden

'That forbidden fruit, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe.'

Our first parents are not felt to be our first parents till they have fallen; then it is that we indeed love them; our filial affection is made tender by pity, and awful by fear, and we weep to think of them, as they,

'Hand in hand, and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.'

It was original sin that made this earth so beautiful, that gave it a beauty dashed

Adam and Paradise

and broken with tears. Look long at a rose-bush covered with lapsing dew-drops, and you grow sorrowful, full of sorrow. If there were not the consciousness of some great loss, and the presage of some great restoration, a sight so simple in its purity could not so profoundly move the spirit, as that its confession should be a prayer. Not surely in form and colour alone lies the beauty of the rainbow.

We envy Adam because he was driven from Paradise. For a while the earth for him and poor Eve brought forth but thorns, so is it writ. But as the wind blew from Paradise, it brought seeds that sowed themselves in the desert, till erelong the desert blossomed like the rose. Assisted by younger hands, Adam could afford to steal an hour or two, as the sun was westering, from the toil of field till-

age, and through the twilight, and sometimes well on into the night, would he and Eve, not unregarded by the stars, work by their two selves, shaping bowers, and arbours, and glades, so as to form, by a model imperishable in their memories, another small new garden of Eden, not, indeed, so delightful, but dearer, far dearer, to their souls, because every leaf was tinted by grief. Melancholy names did they give, then, to the thoughtless plants and flowers, and they loved them the better that thenceforth they reminded them always, but not painfully, of their transgression, now suffering a punishment so softened, that it sometimes was felt to be a chastened peace. Their hillside garden sloped to a stream, that, no doubt, was a branch of the holy river, of which the blind seer sings, 'southward

A new Garden of Eden

All gardens are beautiful

through Eden went a river large.' We see the vision now, but fear to paint it. Eve is still in her mortal prime; and as for Adam, not Seth's self is comparable to his sire, though his parents were wont to say, that their Seth had a face and a form that reminded them of one of the angels, that to be indeed an angel, he wanted but those wings that winnowed fragrance through the air as they descended on Paradise.

And thus it is that to us all gardens are beautiful, and all gardeners Adam's favourite sons. An orchard! Families of fruit-trees 'nigh planted by a river,' and that river the Clyde. Till we gazed on you, we knew not how dazzling may be the delicate spring, even more than the gorgeous autumn with all her purple and gold. No frost can wither, no blast can

scatter such a power of blossoming as there brightens the day with promise that the gladdened heart may not for a moment doubt will be fulfilled! And now we walk arm in arm with a venerable lady along a terrace hung high above a river—but between us and the brink of the precipice a leafless lawn—not of grass, but of moss, whereon centuries seem softly embedded—and lo! we are looking —to the right down down the glen, and to the left up up the glen—though to the left it takes a majestic bend, so that yonder castle, seemingly in front of us, stands on one of its cliffs. Now we are looking over the top of the holly-hedges twenty feet high, and over the stately yew-pawns and peacocks; but hark! the flesh-and-blood peacock shrieking from the pine! An old English garden, such as Bacon, or

A terrace view

Garden visions

Evelyn, or Cowley would have loved—felicitously placed, with all its solemn calm, above the reach of the roar of a Scottish flood!

But we shall not permit the visions of gardens thus to steady themselves before our imagination; and, since they will come, away must they pass like magic shadows on a sheet. There you keep gliding in hundreds along with your old English halls, or rectories, or parsonages—some, alas! looking dilapidated and forlorn, but few in ruins, and, thank heaven! many of you in the decay of time renewed by love, and many more still fresh and strong, though breathing of antiquity, as when there was not one leaf of all that mass of ivy in which the highest chimneys are swathed and buried all the gables. Oh! stay but for one moment

longer, thou garden of the cliffs! Gone by! with all thine imagery, half-garden and half-forest, reflected in thine own tarn, and with thee a glimmer of green mountains and of dusky woods! Sweet visionary shadow of the poor man's cot and garden! A blessing be upon thee, almost on the edge of the bleak moor!

A flush of flowers

But villages, and towns, and cities travel by mistily, carrying before our ken many a green series of little rural or suburban gardens, all cultivated by owners' or tenants' hands, and beneath the blossomed fruit-trees, the ground variegated with many a flush of flowers. What pinks! Aye, we know them well, the beautiful garden-plots on the banks and braes all round about our native town, pretty Paisley—and in among the very houses in nooks and corners which

The loveliest flower

the sunshine does not scorn to visit—and as the glamour goes by, sweet to our soul is the thought of the Kilbarchan, the loveliest flower in heaven or on earth, for 'tis the prize-pink of our childhood, given us by our Father's hand, and we see now the spot where the fine-grained glory grew.

IX

COWPER'S GARDEN

(FROM HIS LETTERS)

GARDENING was, of all employments, that in which I succeeded best; though even in this I did not suddenly attain perfection. I began with lettuces and cauliflowers: from them I proceeded to cucumbers; next to melons. I then purchased an orange-tree, to which, in due time, I added two or three myrtles. These served me day and night with employment during a whole severe winter. To defend them from the frost, in a situation that exposed them to its severity, cost me much ingenuity and much attendance. I contrived to give them a fire heat; and have waded night after night through the snow, with the bellows under my arm, just before going to bed, to give the latest possible puff to the

Winter duties

A great florist

embers, lest the frost should seize them before morning. Very minute beginnings have sometimes important consequences. From nursing two or three little evergreens, I became ambitious of a green-house, and accordingly built one; which, verse excepted, afforded me amusement for a longer time than any expedient of all the many to which I have fled for refuge from the misery of having nothing to do. When I left Olney for Weston, I could no longer have a green-house of my own; but in a neighbour's garden I find a better, of which the sole management is consigned to me.

March 14, 1767.

I am become a great florist, and shrub-doctor. If the Major can make up a small packet of seeds, that will make a

figure in a garden, where we have little Melons
else besides jessamine and honeysuckle; such a packet I mean as may be put in one's fob, I will promise to take great care of them, as I ought to value natives of the Park. They must not be such however as require great skill in the management, for at present I have no skill to spare.

Aug. 1, 1776.

The coldness of the past season would be forgotten in the heat of the present, if the effects of it were not still visible in the garden. My melons, which ought to have been eaten or at least eatable by this time, are not yet ripe; and as you are making your repose at Wargrove, you will agree with me, I imagine, that it would hardly be worth while to trundle them so far. Else, as I flatter myself they

Gardeners exchanges

will be better flavoured than such as are raised for sale, which are generally flashy, and indebted to the watering-pot for their size, I should have been glad to have sent you half my crop.

If it were to rain pupils, perhaps I might catch a tub full; but till it does, the fruitlessness of my inquiries makes me think I must keep my Greek and Latin to myself.

Dec. 3, 1778.

I made Mr. Wright's gardener a present of fifty sorts of stove plant seeds: in return, he has presented me with six fruiting pines, which I have put into a bark bed, where they thrive at present as well as I could wish. If they produce good fruit, you will stand some little chance to partake of them. But you must not expect giants, for being trans-

Beneficial intercourse

planted in December will certainly give them a check, and probably diminish their size. He has promised to supply me with still better plants in October, which is the proper season for moving them, and with a reinforcement every succeeding year. Mrs. Hill sent me the seeds; which perhaps could not have been purchased for less than three guineas. 'Tis thus we great gardeners establish a beneficial intercourse with each other, and furnish ourselves with valuable things that, therefore, cost us nothing.

Nov. 16, 1782.

You may not, perhaps, live to see your trees attain to the dignity of timber;—I, nevertheless, approve of your planting, and the disinterested spirit that prompts you to it. Few people plant, when they

Tree-planting

are young; a thousand other less profitable amusements divert their attention; and most people, when the date of youth is once expired, think it too late to begin. I can tell you, however, for your comfort and encouragement, that when a grove, which Major Cowper had planted, was of eighteen years' growth, it was no small ornament to his grounds, and afforded as complete a shade as could be desired. Were I as old as your mother, in whose longevity I rejoice, and the more, because I consider it as, in some sort, a pledge and assurance of yours, and should come to the possession of land worth planting, I would begin to-morrow, and even without previously insisting upon a bond from Providence that I should live five years longer.

SPRING

February 20, 1783.

I have been refreshing myself with a walk in the garden, where I find that January (who according to Chaucer was the husband of May) being dead, February has married the widow. My favourite recess

June 8, 1783.

Our severest winter, commonly called the spring, is now over, and I find myself seated in my favourite recess, the greenhouse. In such a situation, so silent, so shady, where no human foot is heard, and where only my myrtles presume to peep in at the window, you may suppose I have no interruption to complain of, and that my thoughts are perfectly at my command. But the beauties of the spot are themselves an interruption; my attention is called upon by those very

Advice myrtles, by a double row of grass pinks just beginning to blossom, and by a bed of beans already in bloom; and you are to consider it, if you please, as no small proof of my regard, that though you have so many powerful rivals, I disengage myself from them all, and devote this hour entirely to you.

Nov. 10, 1783.

I suspect you of being too sedentary. 'You cannot walk.' Why you cannot is best known to yourself. I am sure your legs are long enough, and your person does not overload them. But I beseech you ride, and ride often. I think I have heard you say, you cannot even do that without an object. Is not health an object? Is not a new prospect, which in most countries is gained at the end of every mile, an object? Assure yourself

that easy-chairs are no friends to cheerfulness, and that a long winter spent by the fireside is a prelude to an unhealthy spring. Everything I see in the fields is to me an object, and I can look at the same rivulet, or at a handsome tree, every day of my life, with new pleasure. This indeed is partly the effect of a natural taste for rural beauty, and partly the effect of habit; for I never in all my life have let slip the opportunity of breathing fresh air, and of conversing with nature, when I could fairly catch it. I earnestly recommend a cultivation of the same taste to you, suspecting that you have neglected it, and suffer for doing so. Rural pleasure

June 25, 1785.

I write in a nook that I call my Boudoir. It is a summer-house not much

'My Boudoir' bigger than a sedan chair, the door of which opens into the garden, that is now crowded with pinks, roses, and honeysuckles, and the window into my neighbour's orchard. It formerly served an apothecary, now dead, as a smoking-room; and under my feet is a trap-door, which once covered a hole in the ground, where he kept his bottles. At present, however, it is dedicated to sublimer uses. Having lined it with garden mats, and furnished it with a table and two chairs, here I write all that I write in summer-time, whether to my friends, or to the public. It is secure from all noise, and refuge from all intrusion; for intruders sometimes trouble me in the winter evenings at Olney. But (thanks to my Boudoir!) I can now hide myself from them. A poet's retreat is sacred.

July 9, 1785.

I told you, I believe, that the Spinney has been cut down; and, though it may seem sufficient to have mentioned such an occurrence once, I cannot help recurring to the melancholy theme. Last night, at near nine o'clock, we entered it for the first time this summer. We had not walked many yards in it, before we perceived that this pleasant retreat is destined never to be a pleasant retreat again. In one more year, the whole will be a thicket. That which was once the serpentine walk is now in a state of transformation, and is already become as woody as the rest. Poplars and elms without number are springing in the turf. They are now as high as the knee. Before the summer is ended, they will be twice as high; and the growth of another season

The Spinney

Farewell, Spinney!

will make them trees. It will then be impossible for any but a sportsman and his dog to penetrate it. The desolation of the whole scene is such, that it sunk our spirits. The ponds are dry. The circular one, in front of the hermitage, is filled with flags and rushes; so that, if it contains any water, not a drop is visible. The weeping willow at the side of it, the only ornamental plant that has escaped the axe, is dead. The ivy and the moss, with which the hermitage was lined, are torn away; and the very mats that covered the benches have been stripped off, rent in tatters, and trodden under foot. So farewell, Spinney; I have promised myself that I will never enter it again. We have both prayed in it: you for me, and I for you. But it is desecrated from this time forth, and the

voice of prayer will be heard in it no more. The fate of it in this respect, however deplorable, is not peculiar. The spot where Jacob anointed his pillar, and, which is more apposite, the spot once honoured with the presence of Him who dwelt in the bush, have long since suffered similar disgrace, and are become common ground. Desecration

Feb. 9, 1786.

Let me tell you once more, that your kindness in promising us a visit has charmed us both. I shall see you again. I shall hear your voice. We shall take walks together. I will show you my prospects, the hovel, the alcove, the Ouse, and its banks, everything that I have described. I anticipate the pleasure of those days not very far distant, and feel a part of it at this moment. . . . I will not let

The greenhouse

you come till the end of May, or beginning of June, because before that time my green-house will not be ready to receive us, and it is the only pleasant room belonging to us. When the plants go out, we go in. I line it with mats, and spread the floor with mats; and there you shall sit with a bed of mignonette at your side, and a hedge of honeysuckles, roses, and jasmine; and I will make you a bouquet of myrtle every day. Sooner than the time I mention the country will not be in complete beauty. And I will tell you what you shall find at your first entrance. Imprimis, as soon as you have entered the vestibule, if you cast a look on either side of you, you shall see on the right hand a box of my making. It is the box in which have been lodged all my hares, and in which lodges Puss at present: but he,

poor fellow, is worn out with age, and promises to die before you can see him. On the right hand stands a cupboard, the work of the same author; it was once a dove-cage, but I transformed it. Opposite to you stands a table, which I also made; but a merciless servant having scrubbed it until it became paralytic, it serves no purpose now but of ornament; and all my clean shoes stand under it. On the left hand, at the further end of this superb vestibule, you will find the door of the parlour, into which I will conduct you.

The keys of the garden

May 1, 1786.

Nothing can be more obliging than the behaviour of the Throckmortons has ever been to us; they long since gave us the keys of all their retreats, even of their kitchen-garden. And that you may not

Myrtles suspect your cousin of being any other than a very obliging creature too, I will give you a stroke of his politesse. When they were here they desired to see the garden and green-house. I am proud of neither, except in poetry, because there I can fib without lying, and represent them better than they are. However, I conducted them to the sight, and having set each of the ladies with her head in a bush of myrtle, I took out my scissors and cut a bouquet for each of them. When we were with *them* Mrs. Throckmorton told me that she had put all the slips into water, for she should be so glad to make them grow, and asked me if they would strike root. I replied, that I had known such things happen, but believed that they were very rare, and recommended a hot-bed rather, and she immediately resolved

that they should have one. . . . In the evening I ordered my labourer to trundle up a wheelbarrow of myrtles and canary lavender (a most fragrant plant), to Weston, with which I sent a note to Mrs. Throckmorton, recommending them to her protection.

The fading flowers

May 29, 1786.

Spring, backward as it is, is too forward, because many of its beauties will have faded before you will have an opportunity to see them. We took our customary walk yesterday in the wilderness at Weston, and saw, with regret, the laburnums, syringas, and guelder-roses, some of them blown, and others just upon the point of blowing, and could not help observing—all these will be gone before Lady Hesketh comes! Still however there will be roses, and

The passion for retirement

jasmine, and honeysuckle, and shady walks, and cool alcoves, and you will partake them with us. But I want you to have a share of everything that is delightful here, and cannot bear that the advance of the season should steal away a single pleasure before you can come to enjoy it.

June 27, 1788.

The country, this country at least, is pleasant at all times, and when winter is come, or near at hand, we shall have the better chance for being snug. I know your passion for retirement indeed, or for what we call *deedy* retirement. . . . You will . . . find here exactly the retirement in question. I have made in the orchard the best winter-walk in all the parish, sheltered from the east, and from the north-east, and open to the sun, ex-

cept at his rising, all the day. Then we will have Homer and *Don Quixote*: and then we will have saunter and chat, and one laugh more before we die. Our Orchard is alive with creatures of all kinds; poultry of every denomination swarms in it, and pigs, the drollest in the world! Our Orchard

July 28, 1788.

You have given me a most complete idea of your mansion and its situation; and I doubt not that with your letter in my hand by way of map, could I be set down on the spot in a moment, I should find myself qualified to take my walks and my pastime in whatever quarter of your paradise it should please me the most to visit. We also, as you know, have scenes at Weston worthy of description; but because you know them well,

The lime walk

I will only say that one of them has, within these few days, been much improved; I mean the lime walk. By the help of the axe and the wood-bill which have of late been constantly employed in cutting out all straggling branches that intercepted the arch, Mr. Throckmorton has now defined it with such exactness, that no cathedral in the world can show one of more magnificence or beauty. I bless myself that I live so near it; for were it distant several miles, it would be well worth while to visit it, merely as an object of taste; not to mention the refreshment of such a gloom both to the eyes and spirits. And these are the things which our modern improvers of parks and pleasure grounds have displaced without mercy, because, forsooth, they are rectilinear! It is a wonder they

do not quarrel with the sunbeams for the same reason. An astonishing discovery

Sept. 6, 1793.

It was only the day before yesterday that, while we walked after dinner in the orchard, Mrs. Unwin between Sam and me, hearing the hall-clock, I observed a great difference between that and ours, and began immediately to lament, as I had often done, that there was not a sun-dial in all Weston to ascertain the true time for us. My complaint was long, and lasted till having turned into the grass walk, we reached the new building at the end of it; where we sat awhile and reposed ourselves. In a few minutes we returned by the way we came, when what think you was my astonishment to see what I had not seen before, though I had passed close by it, a smart sun-dial

Sam Roberts

mounted on a smart stone pedestal; I assure you it seemed the effect of conjuration. I stopped short, and exclaimed, —'Why, here is a sun-dial, and upon our ground! How is this? Tell me, Sam, how came it here? Do you know anything about it?' At first I really thought (that is to say, as soon as I could think at all) that this factotum of mine, Sam Roberts, having often heard me deplore the want of one, had given orders for the supply of that want himself, without my knowledge, and was half pleased and half offended. But he soon exculpated himself by imputing the fact to you. It was brought up to Weston (it seems) about noon: but Andrews stopped the cart at the blacksmith's, whence he went to inquire if I was gone for my walk. As it happened, I walked not till two o'clock.

THE SUNDIAL

So there it stood waiting till I should go forth, and was introduced before my return. Fortunately too I went out at the church end of the village, and consequently saw nothing of it. How I could possibly pass it without seeing it, when it stood in the walk, I know not, but it is certain that I did. And where I shall fix it now, I know as little. It cannot stand between the two gates, the place of your choice, as I understand from Samuel, because the hay-cart must pass that way in the season. But we are now busy in winding the walk all round the orchard, and in doing so shall doubtless stumble at last upon some open spot that will suit it. The sun-dial

There it shall stand, while I live, a constant monument of your kindness.

X

OF QUEENS' GARDENS

JOHN RUSKIN

HAVE you ever considered what a deep under meaning there lies, or at least may be read, if we choose, in our custom of strewing flowers before those whom we think most happy? Do you suppose it is merely to deceive them into the hope that happiness is always to fall thus in showers at their feet?—that wherever they pass they will tread on herbs of sweet scent, and that the rough ground will be made smooth for them by depth of roses? So surely as they believe that, they will have, instead, to walk on bitter herbs and thorns; and the only softness to their feet will be of snow. But it is not thus intended they should believe; there is a better meaning in that old custom. The

Of the strewing of flowers

The path of a good woman

path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, not before them. 'Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy.'

You think that only a lover's fancy; —false and vain! How if it could be true? You think this also, perhaps, only a poet's fancy—

> 'Even the light harebell raised its head
> Elastic from her airy tread.'

But it is little to say of a woman, that she only does not destroy where she passes. She should revive; the harebells should bloom, not stoop, as she passes. You think I am rushing into wild hyperbole? Pardon me, not a whit—I mean what I say in calm English, spoken in resolute truth. You have heard it said—(and I believe there is more than fancy even in

that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one)—that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers into brighter bloom by a kind look upon them: nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard;—if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillar spare—if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind, in frost—'Come, thou south, and breathe upon my garden, that the spices of it may flow out.' This you would think a great thing? And do you think it not a greater thing, that all this (and how much more than this!) you *can* do, for fairer flowers than these—flowers that could

Garden magic

Flower thoughts and flower lives

bless you for having blessed them, and will love you for having loved them;—flowers that have thoughts like yours, and lives like yours; and which, once saved, you save for ever? Is this only a little power? Far among the moorlands and the rocks,—far in the darkness of the terrible streets,—these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems broken—will you never go down to them, nor set them in order in their little fragrant beds, nor fence them, in their trembling, from the fierce wind? Shall morning follow morning, for you, but not for them; and the dawn rise to watch, far away, those frantic Dances of Death; but no dawn rise to breathe upon these living banks of wild violet, and woodbine, and rose; nor call to you, through your casement,

—call (not giving you the name of the English poet's lady, but the name Dante's great Matilda, who on the edge of happy Lethe, stood, wreathing flowers with flowers), saying,— A garden invitation

'Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad
And the musk of the roses blown'?

Will you not go down among them? among those sweet living things, whose new courage, sprung from the earth with the deep colour of heaven upon it, is starting up in strength of goodly spire; and whose purity, washed from the dust, is opening, bud by bud, into the flower of promise; and still they turn to you and for you, 'The Larkspur listens—I hear, I hear! And the Lily whispers—I wait.'

Did you notice that I missed two lines when I read you that first stanza; and

A sweeter garden

think that I had forgotten them? Hear them now:—

'Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown.
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate, alone.'

Who is it, think you, who stands at the gate of this sweeter garden, alone, waiting for you? Did you ever hear, not of a Maud, but a Madeleine, who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found One waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener? Have you not sought Him often; sought Him in vain, all through the night; sought Him in vain at the gate of that old garden where the fiery sword is set? He is never there; but at the gate of *this* garden He is waiting always—waiting to take your hand—ready to go down to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the

vine has flourished, and the pomegranate budded. There you shall see with Him the little tendrils of the vines that His hand is guiding—there you shall see the pomegranate springing where His hand cast the sanguine seed;—more: you shall see the troops of the angel keepers that, with their wings, wave away the hungry birds from the pathsides where He has sown, and call to each other between the vineyard rows, 'Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.' Oh—you queens—you queens; among the hills and happy greenwood of this land of yours, shall the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; and in your cities shall the stones cry out against you, that they are the only pillows where the Son of Man can lay His head?

The keepers of the garden

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